An Inaugural Dissertation On Diabetes

Presented to the Faculty of The University of Pennsylvania For the degree of M.D.

By Albert R. Ober of Goshen: Maryland.

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Notwithstanding our acquaintance with this disease has within a few years been considerably extended, yet we must unquestionably be led to acknowledge that it is exceedingly difficult to assign a correct definition for the term diabetes. By Cullen it is asserted that this disease consists merely in the voiding of an unusually large quantity of urine, whilst by others it is maintained apparently with equal plausibility that the urine itself undergoes considerable change. There is in my opinion no question of the propriety of including both views of the subject in the strict definition of the term. It is believed by Cullen that this disease is sometimes connected with calculous affections of the kidneys, and that an irritation applied to them may increase the secretion of urine, but finally concludes that the singular change produced in the urine is not so easily explained. If we be permitted to argue from analogy, I think, fewer obstacles will occur in

unfolding this mystery than we at first sight should be inclined to imagine. In attempting an investigation of this subject I would in the first place enquire how it is with regard to other organs of the human system when they become disordered by the application of morbid extraneous matter to them; whether they do not assume a secretory action entirely different from the natural one? If the idea advanced be considered as tenable we cannot but infer that the kidneys are governed by laws equally as obligatory as those by which other organs are influenced; or must it be allowed that they can become deranged and still retain the power of affording an unaltered secretion which would be claiming a ground that we are by no means entitled to. Stronger arguments in support of calculous affections being connected with, and interested in effecting this disease are afforded

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in the well-known facts that after having dissolved the calculi by the administration of suitable medicines and having prevented the predisposition to the deposition of urinary calculi by the use of a proper diet, the disease will in very many instances cease. It is believed by some authors who have written upon this affection that the liver is somewhat concerned in the formation of it in consequence of the bile being altered from its natural appearance; On the other hand this reasoning will not appear conclusive when we reflect that diabetes has prevailed without the liver having experienced any change whatever, a truth which has been incontestibly established. We may therefore rest satisfied that the notion of bile being effectual in producing diabetes is altogether negatory, hypothetical and in no way satisfactory. The division of this disease made

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by Mitus is into diabetes insipidus and mellitus
Concurring in the opinion expressed by some
Authors that it should in its most proper
sense be confined to the latter species I shall
therefore limit my remarks to the consideration
of it alone. Of this disease the Ancients have
furnished us no record in their writings, which
would lead us to believe they possessed any
very distinct or correct notions of its pathology,
causes or manner of treatment. It was
not until the year 1684 that we obtained
any regular account of it. At this period the
celebrated Willis appeared and dissipated
the cloud which had previously obscured
it. By him the idea was entertained that
the proximate cause depended on some fault
in the assimilatory powers, but from this
I would beg leave to differ and contend
that the remote cause rather depended

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upon a deformation of these powers. The vessels [illegible] it is consistent [illegible] applied [illegible] immediate and [illegible] various [illegible] conditions of stimulations [illegible] new productive of it. It is added that the phenomena of disease [illegible] explained upon the principle [illegible] retrograde motion of some of the branches of the absorbent system. It would seem not [illegible] branches of the absorbent or lymphatic [illegible] sympathies with each other, the kind of sympathy [illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible]

[illegible] is permanently capable, [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [

[illegible] appetite, which is one of the most [illegible]

[illegible] this [illegible]

[illegible] brain and [illegible] in the [illegible]

[illegible] of the disease to be attended to, [illegible]

to cause all the symptoms we have mentioned,

[illegible] and we [illegible] by

strength and consolation. The disease not

be [illegible] [illegible], [illegible] and the

[illegible] dropsy [illegible] the pulse is usually

[illegible] and feeble, [illegible] urine is [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] in mortality from

the moral disease, [illegible] [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] disease [illegible] almost

considered a constitution in some families

[illegible] peculiarly predisposed to it. [illegible]

[illegible] [illegible] particularly convenient where

[illegible]

[illegible]

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[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] irregulari-
ties [illegible] the [illegible] first [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] began
[illegible] [illegible] purpose [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] palpitation. The appearances
in post mortem examinations [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] appearances and
[illegible] found [illegible] diseased [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] instances the [illegible] will be found
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] sometimes [illegible] dilatation [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] thickened
inflamed and of a [illegible] colour. The bladder
[illegible] [illegible] thickened and diminished in
volume. The [illegible] viscera above named
are not always implicated but the liver and
kidneys generally experience the greatest
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] mentioned the arguments in favour of
the [illegible] [illegible] of the affections appear to

[illegible]

[illegible] with regard to [illegible] not alone the [illegible] with [illegible] and [illegible] examination, [illegible] the result of [illegible] most [illegible] and [illegible] to the [illegible] apparatus. Previous [illegible] found in the last [illegible] affection [illegible] the discoveries, [illegible] by him, but in a wonderful degree tended to [illegible] that [illegible] which had [illegible] existed (If it be admitted that the distin[illegible] in the [illegible] disease of course [illegible] affections [illegible] the same [illegible] definite [illegible] dition. With this view of the subject it will [illegible] made

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[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] exist [illegible]
[illegible] and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] out the greatest [illegible]
[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] element [illegible]
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[illegible] [illegible] [illegible] we should then [illegible] [illegible]
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Leconte; and [illegible] [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
and [illegible] the latter ~~species~~ [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]
appears to have attracted the greatest [illegible]
attention. Recent researches [illegible] [illegible] [illegible]

has been most strenuously recommended by Bateman. He considers it to be an almost infallible remedy. He commonly begins with small doses as 2 or 3 gr. gradually augmenting it to either a few times a day. Dover thinks he has derived considerable benefit from the use of wine whey. As nervous irritation is a remarkably common accompaniment in this disease, and as it is advisable to allay this, the antispasmodics are generally resorted to. The most effectual article of that class is unquestionably opium. At this period the skin is usually dry and hard and for the purpose of producing moisture and relaxing the surface, nothing more suitable can be adopted than the employment of the warm bath together with friations. The various diaphoretics are also proper and the article most generally preferred is that of Dover's powder. Notwithstanding we may have decayed and shattered constitutions to deal with, we should not lose sight of the immense advantage, which on all hands is allowed to accrue from the abstraction of blood. It was employed in the beginning of the last

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contrary. Bloodletting should not be sparingly used according to some authors. If much local pain should be present, topical bleeding by cups and leeches may be beneficially employed, after which a blister may be applied over the lumbar region and continued for a considerable length of time. Little will all our remedies effect unless the strictest attention be paid to a proper regimen. My Preceptor informed me he had accomplished perfect cures in several members of the same family by confining the patients to the use of an animal diet and not allowing them even a particle of vegetable food. The propriety of this course was suggested to him on reading the experiments of Dr. Wilson Philips, an account of which is afforded in his invaluable treatise on febrile diseases. In consequence of frequent relapses in this complaint we should particularly enjoin on our patients to be extremely careful to avoid all those things, which are regarded as exciting causes. — — — — — — — —